

# CDC Rx AWARENESS CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

**From 1999 to 2016, more than 200,000 people died in the United States from overdoses related to prescription opioids.**

**Every day, more than 1,000 people are treated in emergency departments for misusing prescription opioids,<sup>1</sup> and more than 46 people die from prescription opioid overdoses.<sup>2</sup>**



## THE NEED

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, along with other federal agencies, recognizes this critical threat to public health and has made it a priority to raise awareness about the risks of prescription opioid misuse. Critical to achieving this goal was the development of an evidence-based, consumer-directed communications campaign that could resonate with those at risk for prescription opioid misuse and overdose.

## THE APPROACH

CDC's *Rx Awareness* campaign focuses on adults ages 25–54 who have taken opioids at least once for medical or nonmedical use. The goals of CDC's *Rx Awareness* campaign are to:

- Increase awareness that prescription opioids can be addictive and dangerous.
- Increase the number of individuals who avoid using opioids nonmedically (recreationally) or who choose options other than opioids for safe and effective pain management.

Based on past success using testimonials to effectively communicate about complex and sensitive health behaviors, CDC incorporated first-person stories into its public campaign to educate and raise awareness about the dangers of prescription opioid use and abuse.

CDC developed a series of videos as the cornerstone of the campaign, featuring individuals living in recovery or recovering from opioid use disorder, as well as family members who have lost someone to prescription opioid overdose. The testimonials provide compelling real-life accounts to help make others aware of the risks and dangers of prescription opioids.

## Rx AWARENESS CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

### DIGITAL

- 15- and 30-second testimonial videos
- Web banner ads
- Online search ads
- 5-second bumper digital video ads
- Social media ads

### CAMPAIGN WEBSITE

- [www.cdc.gov/RxAwareness](http://www.cdc.gov/RxAwareness)

### RADIO

- 30-second ads

### OUT-OF-HOME

- Billboards
- Newspaper ads



**Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention**  
National Center for Injury  
Prevention and Control

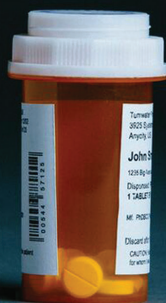
[www.cdc.gov/RxAwareness](http://www.cdc.gov/RxAwareness)

### Prescription opioids can be **addictive and dangerous.**

It only takes a little to lose a lot.



[cdc.gov/RxAwareness](https://cdc.gov/RxAwareness)



Findings from CDC's formative research guided development of the campaign tagline, "It only takes a little to lose a lot," and the reality statement, "Prescription opioids can be addictive and dangerous." For the campaign, the tagline and reality statement are paired with compelling visuals that were also developed with guidance from participant feedback.

In addition to these testimonials, the campaign includes radio ads, web banners, social media ads, newspaper ads, and out-of-home ads. CDC conducted two rounds of formative research to learn which concepts, messages, and materials resonate with target audiences and motivate them to talk with family, friends, and healthcare providers about the risks of prescription opioid use, abuse, and overdose. Research participants included male and female adults from ages 25 to 35 and 45 to 54.

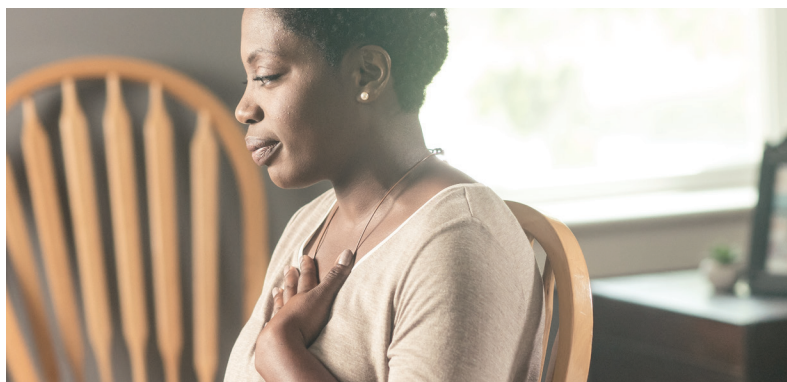
## PILOT TESTING

In December 2016, CDC conducted a pilot that implemented all components of the *Rx Awareness* campaign for 14 weeks in nine high-burden counties in four states: Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, and West Virginia. CDC based this placement on criteria such as reach, participants' readiness to implement a campaign, and level of interest. The pilot presented an important message to these areas—which are highly affected by prescription opioid overdose—while also allowing CDC to test creative campaign materials in the field and obtain valuable input before the campaign was officially launched. An assessment of the pilot campaign explored target audiences' exposure to and perceptions of a series of campaign messages and materials.

## CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

In September 2017, CDC launched the *Rx Awareness* campaign in 16 more high-burden counties in four states: Kentucky, Ohio, Massachusetts, and New Mexico. As of March 2018, 27 states and the District of Columbia have also agreed to run the campaign in some capacity. The launch included a campaign implementation guide to support states in using the campaign materials. These materials were made available to CDC-funded states and can be tagged for local use. The materials will be publicly available through an online resource center, currently in development.

This CDC public health effort includes many other materials, such as a [campaign website](#), [patient-centered resources](#), and [provider tools](#).



<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *The DAWN Report: Highlights of the 2011 Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) findings on drug-related emergency department visits*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; 2013. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/DAWN127/DAWN127/sr127-DAWN-highlights.htm>. Accessed December 2016.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General. *Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; November 2016.